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United States Senate

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March 21, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Trump,

I write to draw your attention to the developing scandal involving Brazilian beef exporters bribing officials to approve the export of spoiled meat and request the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) pause the importation of Brazilian beef until the situation has been resolved. I further request information on what steps USDA is taking to ensure spoiled or contaminated meat has not entered our food supply.

Brazilian authorities announced Friday, March 17, that they are investigating companies JBS SA and BRF SA for bribery and the export of spoiled meat. This includes allegations of bribery and adulteration of meat with acid, some of which were carcinogenic, to cover the smell. Such practices are unacceptable, and I ask you to ensure the safety of American families by halting the import of Brazilian beef until this matter has been resolved. This is particularly concerning given the federal hiring freeze and lack of leadership at the Department possibly impacting import inspections.

Families across the country depend on the USDA to ensure the safety of the food they put on the table each night. We pride ourselves for producing the world's top quality and safest food, and we must not lower these standards for imports. Such a move would not only endanger our children, but also the reputation of U.S. beef producers whose meat is sold next to imported meat—now without mandatory country of origin labeling.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. I look forward to working with you to safeguard our food supply from this scandal.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate

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